5/30/71

Dear Harris,

Your letter of the 27th and Margaret's note were at the post office, which has been holding my mail, when I returned from the scheduled hearing in Wilmington last evening. My Thursday's mail included a copy of the Wolff letter from one of my radical-right adversaries the [illegible] my shares seem to be running into a friend. Before going into that, my immediate and very busy schedule.

The hearing in Wilmington was set back a week and for this coming Friday. I will have to leave Thursday. I expect to return immediately after the hearing. Meanwhile, a series of pleadings and papers must be prepared, and there are new negotiations that may lead to a settlement, the wholesaler not denying he never paid, merely claiming that the statute of limitations has run. It hasn't, but I'm no lawyer and can't hire one.

Wednesday, early, the federal attorney in Baltimore is due here, on the judge's orders, to work on our old damage suit also with an eye toward negotiating a settlement. Thus only the rest of the holiday weekend and Tuesday remain for all the many things plus these new preparations.

On top of all of this, there is now a hearing on one of my suits for denied JFK assassination evidence, in Federal District Court in Washington, for 6/15. With the record in this case complicated, greater by far than a long book in length, there is much preparation I must make for that, for I face the best the government can offer in court, and that all alone. Again, I am pro se.

However, should I overcome the multitudinous handicaps and prevail, this should offer you real opportunities if you ever decide to use any. And there is an old commitment I made long before I knew of you on which I'd started working and promised to deliver by now. So, even for me, I'm pretty busy. And will be.

By now it should be pretty clear to you that all the predictions I made to David when he was here were not dreams or paranoia but based on a long and distasteful history of media dishonesty and corruption on this subject, or my side of it in particular. The unkindest cut is Wolff's. You will find that when you raised Mel's question about this footnote, I offered no objection to your removing it, leaving it entirely up to you (10/21/70). I am not criticizing you. I feel and felt it belongs in, as part of the overall picture.

I have, unfortunately in the required haste, drafted a lengthy letter to Leonard. Lil will type it today and I'll drive into the post office with this and it in the hope there is an outgoing mail and the letters can reach you and Leonard Monday a.m. I had planned to send the letter to Leonard certified, but decided speed is more important, for that cannot now be done before Tuesday a.m. I may send a carbon that way. What I have cited from my files is but a small part of what they hold, especially on the Post and Times, and for the reason given. I have avoided names, but not because I do not have them. One star reporter was fired by the Post in this period, the one to whom the book had been assigned originally. He is Dan Kurzman, who may have no clear recollection at this point, may not want to get involved, and is busy with a book-into-movie deal. We have been in indirect communication through a mutual friend before this came up. I have asked Jerry, who called in anguish and anger late last night and kept me up to 2 a.m., to try and reach him. I also asked him to phone you and read you a few of the excerpts from those files. I have yet to check them myself. When Jerry phoned I had my wife glance through them. The DJ lawyer not named is Howard Willens, who was, while on the DJ payroll, where he returned, the Warren Commission's liaison with it. Conflicts no end. The then national editor was Larry Stern, Willens' friend, and it is Willens failure to meet anything in POST MORTEM to Stern and Dick Harwood that for a fleeting, fleeting moment turned the Post on. By their proarrangements with me, I omitted Stern and Hayward on their return from seeing Wiggins. I could go on and on. My letter to Leonard is, really, understated. Wiggins was a bastard. Louis Baron, then [illegible] Times Wash. correspondent and now in England an American editor, interceded with Wiggins after they double-crossed me, by coincidence in the edition that appeared exactly to the day five years ago, and Wiggins invited me to see him, then made promises or rectification he did not keep, and all of this I have, too. The original interest was handled first with Friendly, then with Bradlee, and after explaining something the Post had written to get this started, the thing that persuaded them was the first FBI report to the Commission, of which I gave them copies. Believe me, it is as I say, and there is more on Wolff that I omitted because of the great length this letter has. This includes such things as my reaction to his decency and forthrightness, things like that. Quite the contrary of his today's "hiding" description, Wolff praised the book and the writing, and Freeman actually raved when he had finished the book, when he and Stern and I went from the editorial rooms to the cafeteria for a coffee discussion.

The dirty-work by and at the Times takes up considerable file space. It includes things you will not readily believe but are fact. I was responsible for a second Times assassination investigation when Salisbury read the ms of my second book. The FBI killed the first and incidently the second, chiefly through "liberals" and Gene (I think)Roberts, who when working for a Detroit paper had bought a stolen copy of a doctored picture of Oswald and had this in his past to justify. He is the one they sent to the Archives, and he reported to the Times the things I cited he couldn't find there! Obviously, my source has to be inside the Times, and I respect this man and his situation, so I do not disclose his name. Salisbury was sent to Viet Nam and that, too, was killed. The Times never acknowledged receipt in their listing of any of my books, but we did correspond about them, the book-review people and I, with one letter referred to. I haven't taken time to wade through that enormity to find it.

The New York Review told Jerry they will do something. This can be harmful if their own (Popkin) past with me (1966) were not. Not doing whatever we can, especially with this record, is to quit, to abandon the book. The Review is but one case. Without something to show in refutation, there is no point in making any efforts anywhere now.

In your 5/27 you ask about the rumor I had received about Newsweek "dirty-work". Perhaps with Wolff's connection there, thinkitnit. The rest of this paragraph is not consistent with what you told me of your earlier conversations with Wolff on this book. He had then read it without the current objection. Perhaps it is, as you may be indicating, that it is the [illegible] rather than my use that embarrasses him, but the record is beyond question. On this, please have Margaret send Jerry my carbon of the letter I wrote Wolff which does establish the fact so he can duplicate copies for me. Wolff and Leonard you have described as your friends. They eliminate any need for enemies. For me, anyway.

I am aware that, as with the electronic media, anything you do to make something of this new opportunity to exploit what I told David is the only way such a book can today be a success, the effort to kill and suppress it, can have an adverse influence on your future relations with them. However, even were it not for our understanding on precisely this point, I feel you have a contractual obligation to me to make a serious effort, and I do expect you to. This is an incredible story, it is documented beyond any reasonable doubt, and it is the most serious defamation of me and my work and can have a killing effect on all my writing, now and in the future. I can no more accept it than I can accept your refusal to do anything about it which, in effect, would make you part of it. If you do not have the public-relations know-how to make a reasonable and serious effort, I have already made a recommendation along this line.

I've not yet had a chance to go over what Jerry brought. You have not responded to my letter about the books I had to buy in DC, four of them, at retail.

Please send me the name and address of the authors of the [illegible]